United Nations S/2004/99

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 February 2004

Original: English

Letter dated 5 February 2004 from the Permanent Representatives of Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Ghana, India, Japan, Mexico, Pakistan and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Being major stakeholders in peacekeeping operations, we would like to draw your attention to a concern we are sharing, namely, on decision-making in peacekeeping operations.

At present, the parties involved in decision-making regarding peacekeeping operations consist of the members of the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries, as the case may be. We do not ignore the fact that there are mechanisms providing the basis for the inclusion of other interested Member States in the decision-making process on a case-by-case basis. We are referring here to Council resolution 1353 (2001) and the note by the President of the Council dated 14 January 2002 (S/2002/56).

Past experience has shown, however, that these mechanisms, for various reasons, have so far not succeeded in allowing for substantial input by major stakeholders in peacekeeping operations. Meetings with troop-contributing countries scheduled pursuant to Security Council resolution 1353 (2001) have turned out largely to be of a purely informative and technical nature with little or no relevance for Council decisions. On the other hand, in the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, the so-called new mechanism established pursuant to the above-mentioned note could theoretically provide for truly interactive meetings of stakeholders in peacekeeping operations, thus enriching the work of the Council.

Unfortunately, the potential for a broad-based approach has — with one exception, in autumn 2002, when the Security Council Working Group convened on the situation in Sierra Leone — remained untapped. It is not our intention to go into the reasons for the Working Group's inactivity during the past 15 months. Rather, we need to look forward. The notable increase in demand for peacekeeping operations in Africa, with the need for resources on an unprecedented scale, should be enough of a reason to think of ways and means to organize a more comprehensive and rational decision-making process, involving *all* stakeholders. It is our conviction that, apart from improving the basis for decision-making in the Council, the inclusion of major stakeholders will also create a considerable incentive for the general membership to support peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, in line with established principles of modern political processes, decisions should not be made

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without the participation of those on whose shoulders major financial burdens are being placed or who are politically involved.

It seems to us that the most obvious path to take in this situation would be to schedule regular meetings of the Security Council Working Group as the forum for open debate, allowing all interested parties to make their views known on Council issues concerning peacekeeping operations, like their size, timing and scope and, if relevant, exit strategies. This type of substantive debate would permit the Chairman of the Security Council Working Group to usefully report back to the Council, whose decision-making competence would remain unaffected.

As for the question how to determine who has a legitimate interest in participation, the Security Council has itself set a precedent which could be followed: in public meetings of the Council, non-members with a stake in the agenda item are, upon request, given the right to speak.

We would be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council and if Security Council Working Group meetings on upcoming peacekeeping operations could be organized accordingly.

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Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Ambassador Ahmed **Aboul Gheit**
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(*Signed*) Ambassador Gunter **Pleuger**
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(*Signed*) Ambassador Nana **Effah-Apenteng**
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